



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NONIMMIGRANT VISAS

Q.1 How long can I stay in the United States on a tourist or business visa?

A U.S. nonimmigrant visa grants you permission to travel to a Port of Entry (airport/seaport) in the United States. When you arrive at your destination Port of Entry, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer who processes your entry will determine the length of time that you may remain in the country. You may travel to the United States during the validity of your nonimmigrant visa up to and including the last day the visa is valid. The visa duration does not determine the length of time that you may legally remain in the United States; only the Customs and Border Protection officer can decide this upon your arrival in the United States.

Q.2 My visitor visa (B-1/B-2) expires after my intended date of arrival in the United States. Do I need to get a new visa before departure?

You can arrive in the United States right up to the last date of validity indicated on the visa. The Customs and Border Protection officer on arrival determines the duration of your stay in the United States. Your visa can expire while you are still in the United States – just be sure that you do not overstay the period of time the officer grants

Q.3 My U.S. visa will expire in the next 6 months. Do I need to apply for a new visa after my current visa expires or can I apply in advance?

You do not have to wait until your current visa expires. You can apply for a new visa even if your current visa is valid.

Q.4 My current U.S. visa was issued to me when I was working in my previous job. Now I have changed to a new job at a new company and my new employer wants me to attend a conference in the United States, scheduled for next month. Can I use the same visa or do I have to apply for a new visa?

You can travel to the United States on the same visa as long as your visa is valid for business or pleasure.

Q.5 My child is studying in the United States. Can I go live with him?

While you can use your own B-1/B-2 visa to visit your child, you may not live with your child unless you have your own immigrant, work, or student visa.

Q.6 Can I use a B1/B2 visa to live and work in the U.S?

U.S. immigration law limits the use of a B1/B2 visa to travel of a specific, limited duration. If your intent is to stay indefinitely, then B1/B2 is not the appropriate category for you. The law also forbids obtaining or engaging in paid employment while traveling on a B1/B2 visa.

Q.7 How long does my passport have to be valid in order to apply for a U. S. visa?

You must possess a passport valid for travel to the United States with a validity date at least six months beyond your intended period of stay in the United States.



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Q.8 How early should I apply for my student visa?

You are encouraged to apply for your nonimmigrant student visa as soon as you have your I-20. To ensure you get an early and timely date you may apply within 365 days from the start date of your program shown on your form I-20.

Q.9 I received my student visa, when should I travel?

For your initial entry, you may only enter the United States within 30 days of the beginning of the course of study stated on your I-20, regardless of when your visa was issued.

Q.10 What is an I-20 and how do I get it?

The Form I-20 is an official U.S. Government form, issued by a certified school, which a prospective nonimmigrant student must have in order to get an F-1 or M-1 visa. Form I-20 acts as proof-of-acceptance and contains the information necessary to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee, apply for a visa or change visa status, and be admitted into the United States. The Form I-20 has the student's SEVIS identification number, which starts with the letter N and is followed by nine digits, on the upper right side directly above the barcode.

Q.11 What if I receive an I-20 to a different school?

If you received an I-20 after scheduling your appointment, then you can inform the U.S. consular officer of the new I-20 at the time of the interview.

Q.12 Can an F-1 student work in the United States?

Full-time students on F visas may seek on-campus employment not to exceed 20 hours per week. After the first year in student status, an applicant may apply for employment off campus with authorization from USCIS. Please contact your student advisor for further information.

Q.13 What is “administrative processing?”

Some visa applications require further administrative processing, which takes additional time after your interview with a consular officer. You are advised of this possibility at the conclusion of your visa interview. We realize that applicants have time sensitive travel plans; therefore, we try to complete the administrative processing as quickly as possible. The consular officer may require further information to continue your administrative processing and will give you a questionnaire to fill out and submit via e-mail. The sooner you submit the questionnaire, the sooner the officer can make a decision on your application.

Q.14 How can I extend my visa?

The validity of a visa cannot be extended regardless of its type. You must apply for a new visa.



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